

THE VILLAGE OF  
**BARTLETT**

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April 9, 2009

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Bernadette McGuire-Rivera, Associate Administrator  
Office of Telecommunications and Information Applications  
Broadband Technology Opportunities Program  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
Room 4812  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20230

RE: Docket Number 090309298-9299-01

Dear Ms. McGuire-Rivera:

America's cities and towns face considerable communications challenges in the Information Age. Thus we urge NTIA to use the funds allocated by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to focus on achieving two vital goals: promoting increased broadband adoption and providing the latest technologies to community emergency services. It is imperative that NTIA take advantage of these funds to help all Americans gain access to the advanced telecommunications that will be driving the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

That America boasts one of the more robust information infrastructures in the country, with broadband services reaching over 90% of all homes, and yet just over half of Americans subscribe at home is a cruel irony. But lack of computer hardware and a belief that the Internet is not relevant to their lives are the chief reasons why non-subscribers stay unconnected. A twin focus on distributing necessary devices and promoting Internet literacy and awareness is a must.

The NTIA should invest in supplying low-income households with the devices needed for regular Internet access. Once these families are online, Internet education programs would help families find applications and information of interest to their everyday lives. NTIA should support grantees that aim to provide computers and Internet training to new users and also help develop culturally-relevant websites and applications to ensure new users are well-educated and able to utilize the Internet in a way that is most beneficial to their lives.

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Next-generation technology challenges are not limited to home broadband adoption. When catastrophic events – be they natural or man-made – occur, communication is the most vital aspect to minimizing additional human and property damage. ARRA funds can be allocated to promote non-terrestrial communications technology such as satellites so that our emergency responders have the most reliable and up-to-date communications systems available.

In both cases, local elected officials are best positioned to identify strong partnerships with local non-profits and businesses and properly allocate resources to address public safety needs. We look forward to assisting NTIA throughout the grant process and thank you for reviewing our comments.

Sincerely,

**VILLAGE OF BARTLETT**

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Catherine J. Melchert".

Catherine J. Melchert  
Village President